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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 001402

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: (SBU) CJCS DISCUSSES IRAQ PRIME MINISTER AND  
MINISTER OF DEFENSE

Classified By: CDA FRANK C. URBANCIC, FOR REASONS 1.4 (A, B)

1. (S) SUMMARY: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Myers discussed the current situation in Iraq with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense April 14. Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah emphasized that Kuwait's support for Coalition efforts in Iraq would continue. General Myers contrasted the current situation in Fallujah and the problems dealing with radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. He said the military situation in Fallujah has been exacerbated by foreign fighters flocking into the city. He explained that al-Sadr's actions has been marginalized and his militia devalued in many areas.

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(U) "A GREAT PARTNERSHIP"  
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2. (C) At the outset of their April 14 meeting at the Prime Minister's residence, General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), thanked Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jabir Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Shaykh Jabir al-Mubarak al-Hamad Al-Sabah for Kuwait's support and termed the USG-GOK relationship "a great partnership."

3. (C) Shaykh Sabah replied, commenting warmly on his September visit to the United States and his meetings with President Bush and other senior officials. He added that the relationship was very firm and that Kuwait was "extremely committed" to making the relationship work. He then solicited General Myers' views on the "realities in Iraq."

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(U) STAYING THE COURSE  
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4. (C) Referencing President Bush's 4/13 press conference, General Myers emphasized that the timetable for transfer of sovereignty is firm. He explained that military plans for future troop deployment to Iraq include requesting the same number of troops as now. But he added, hopefully fewer troops will be needed. He went on to outline the new Coalition military command structure for Iraq, of which the Iraqis will be an integral part.

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(U) UNITED NATIONS  
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5. (C) General Myers acknowledged the Prime Minister's recommendation of an expanded role for the United Nations. He said that despite certain media reports, the UN now appears to play a more serious role there. Shaykh Sabah concurred, saying that Kuwait believes the UN could be very helpful before June 30.

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(S) GOING AFTER AL-SADR  
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6. (S) General Myers articulated the Coalition's case against radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, explaining that the power of al-Sadr has become "further marginalized" by his actions which are beginning to alienate key constituencies inside Iraq including other Shiite leaders and the Kurds. He described al-Sadr's noticeably uncooperative attitude during recent meetings with members of Iraq's Governing Council (IGC) and his defiant attitude toward other clerics. He went on to say that recent attacks against al-Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi militia have severely reduced their military effectiveness; al-Sadr is now surrounded in Al-Najaf. The CJCS stated that one day the Iraqis will bring al-Sadr to justice, but added, "How do you do that without causing a lot of casualties?" Alluding to previous discussions with the CJTF-7 commander LTG Sanchez, which weighed offensive operations options against al-Sadr using Iraqi troops only, a combination of Iraqi and Coalition troops, or Coalition troops alone, General Myers stated that despite the possibility of a backlash by the local populace, Coalition

forces are prepared, if necessary, to go after al-Sadr alone.

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(S) FIRESTORM IN FALLUJAH  
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17. (S) General Myers briefly described the recent military operations in Fallujah, wondering whether the current difficulties in Fallujah could have been mitigated if the Coalition had used the IGC or the tribal council system immediately after the cessation of major military operations in the region last year. Shaykh Sabah agreed with his assessment, he mentioned reports two Kuwaitis may have been killed during the recent fighting in Fallujah.

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(S) IRAN, SYRIA, SAUDI ARABIA  
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18. (S) The Prime Minister said that Iran continues to interfere in Iraq not out of concern for the Iraqis, but as a way of damaging the United States' reputation in Iraq and elsewhere in the region. He said that the Iranian government has given USD 80 million to al-Sadr. He said, "We know that there are many Saudis in Fallujah. We have heard from Syria that about 1,000 Saudis recently crossed the Syrian border into Iraq. Of course, the Syrian government did not tell us that, but we were informed by the Syrian tribes in the area. We naturally on-passed this information to you." General Myers agreed with Shaykh Sabah's assessment of Iran.

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(S) AL-JAZEERA  
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19. (S) Shaykh Sabah warned General Myers that the long history of biased reporting of the Al-Jazeera television station would continue to cause problems for the Coalition. General Myers acknowledged the problem, but told Shaykh Sabah that repeated meetings between USG officials and Al-Jazeera representatives yield little results. Shaykh Sabah facetiously inquired in English if launching a missile at the television station would help.

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(S) "CLOSEST TO THE FIRE"  
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10. (S) GOK's Minister of Defense Shaykh Jabir expressed the GOK's desire to be kept better informed about the situation in Iraq, commenting that as friends of the USG, "We do not wish to hear things from others before we hear it from you." General Myers quickly agreed that it was important that the USG keep Kuwait informed and that the USG needed to do a better job of it. He added that the monthly OSD allied briefings would be conducted weekly from now on. Shaykh Jabir thanked General Myers for these comments adding, "We are closest to the fire. We need to know first." The meeting concluded by Shaykh Sabah stating that he wished the USG continued success in Iraq; he commented in English that Kuwait's support for Coalition efforts in Iraq will continue.

11. (S) COMMENT: This meeting, the first between General Myers and the Prime Minister was perhaps as important for what was said as what was not. AIK fuel was not raised by either side. Neither was the issue of Kuwaiti nationals held at Guantanamo. The GOK realizes how delicate the situation is now in Iraq and does not wish to give any appearance of impeding us at this critical juncture, mindful that, as we often hear from Kuwaitis, in and out of government, "your success in Iraq is our success."

12. (U) The Chairman did not have a chance to clear this cable.  
URBANCIC